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E49

COURT (TSJ) BLOCKED THE CONSULTATIVE REFERENDUM, THE ASSEMBLIES WERE A SUCCESS. AT THE ASSEMBLIES GOVERNMENT SYMPATHIZERS WATCHED THE BROADCAST OF THE PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY SUNDAY TALK SHOW, AND SIGNED PETITIONS FOR THE RECALL OF CARACAS METROPOLITAN MAYOR ALFREDO PENA AND TO SUPPORT THE CASES AGAINST PRIVATE MEDIA THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS ENTERED IN THE TSJ. THE ORGANIZERS ALSO COLLECTED CITIZENS COMPLAINTS ABOUT DAMAGES THEY MAY HAVE SUFFERED DURING THE 60-PLUS DAY STRIKE.
SHAPIRO

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RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CA-01	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00
	EUR-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00
	AC-01	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	T-00	USIE-00
	ASDS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-01	G-00	SAS-00	/009W

-----3198F5 060140Z /34

O 051944Z FEB 03
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9790
INFO WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPLOMATIC POST PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY
AMCONSUL CURACAO PRIORITY
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
USINT HAVANA PRIORITY
USCINCSO MIAMI FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 000320

TREASURY FOR OASIA/INL - AARON JONES
NCS FOR LLORENS
USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR DCHA/OTI - ULLRICH AND PORTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2013
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TAGS: PGOV, PREL, ASEC, CASC, OAS, VE
SUBJECT: VENEZUELA: POLITICAL UPDATE: FEBRUARY 5, 2003

CLASSIFIED BY: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ABELARDO A. ARIAS FOR
REASONS 1.5(B) AND (D)

SUMMARY:

-- (U) THE GOV STARTED AN INVESTIGATION AGAINST ANOTHER
INDEPENDENT TELEVISION BROADCASTER. THE STATION STAFF
GREETED THE OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE
WITH PROTESTS WHEN THEY ARRIVED TO SERVE THE NOTIFICATION.

-- (U) GOV ORGANIZERS CLAIMED SUCCESS FOR MINI "PEOPLE'S
ASSEMBLIES8 HELD FEBRUARY 2.

END SUMMARY.

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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CA-01	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00
	EUR-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00
	AC-01	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	T-00	USIE-00
	ASDS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-01	G-00	SAS-00	/009W

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O 051944Z FEB 03
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9791
INFO WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPLOMATIC POST PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY
AMCONSUL CURACAO PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CARACAS 000320

TREASURY FOR OASIA/INL - AARON JONES
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THE "COUP-MONGERING" OPPOSITION. CHAVEZ HAS ALSO THREATENED
SEVERAL TIMES IN RECENT WEEKS TO CLOSE STATIONS.

ALTERNATE ALTERNATE REFERENDUM

6. (U) WHILE MILLIONS OF VENEZUELANES SIGNED PETITIONS IN
OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ FEBRUARY 2, HIS
SUPPORTERS ORGANIZED MINI "PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLIES" IN 120
LOCATIONS AROUND THE CAPITAL. ACCORDING TO FIFTH REPUBLIC
MOVEMENT (MVR) DEPUTY DARIO VIVAS, WHOSE SUIT IN THE SUPREME

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GOV ANNOUNCES INVESTIGATION AGAINST ANOTHER TV STATION

4. (U) THE MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE GAVE NOTICE FEBRUARY 5
TO INDEPENDENT TELEVISION BROADCASTER VENEVISION THAT THE GOV
HAS OPENED AN ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION AGAINST THE
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STATION. THE GOV REPRESENTATIVES' DELIVERY OF LEGAL PAPERS
TO VENENZISION,S OFFICES BECAME AN EXCUSE FOR A PAGEANT BY
ACTIVISTS FROM BOTH SIDES. DOZENS OF VENEVISION WORKERS
GREETED THE GOV REPRESENTATIVES WITH SHOUTS, CHANTS AND BY
BANGING POTS AND PANS TO PROTEST THE GOV'S ACTION. AT THE
SAME TIME, A SMALL GROUP OF PRO-GOV DEMONSTRATORS ARRIVED AT
THE STATION TO CHANT PRO-CHAVEZ SLOGANS. VENEVISION BEGAN
RUNNING SPOTS IN THE AFTERNOON DECLARING THAT THE GOV'S
ACTION ENDANGERED FREE EXPRESSION, AND THAT THE STATION WOULD
MAKE NO CONCESSION AND WOULD CONTINUE TO INFORM THE PUBLIC.

5. (U) THE GOV'S MOVE FOLLOWS MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE
DIOSDADO CABELLO'S FEBRUARY 4 ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE GOV WILL
BEGIN NEW ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS AGAINST ADDITIONAL
BROADCAST MEDIA OUTLETS, INCLUDING INDEPENDENT RADIO
BROADCASTER UNIONRADIO. CABELLO HAD EARLIER ANNOUNCED
INVESTIGATIONS AGAINST PRIVATE TELEVISION STATIONS
GLOBOVISION AND RCTV. THE ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION IS
THE FIRST STEP IN POSSIBLE GOV SANCTIONS, INCLUDING FINES OR
SIMPLY CLOSING THE STATIONS. PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ HAS
REPEATEDLY COMPLAINED ABOUT TELEVISION PROGRAMMING CRITICAL
OF HIS GOVERNMENT, DESCRIBING THE PRIVATE MEDIA AS PART OF

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